rarely acceptable except to the really great. Haig, Robertson and Nivelle all alike professed a conviction that the morale of the German Army had been shaken to such a degree by the raging of the Somme that its troops would

False belief in German weakness

*Ivea*knes*T* no l°nqer ^ave *the* nerve to sustain a similar experience. There was a flood of secret information to that effect, coming mostly from terrified prisoners whose own nerves were temporarily shaken by experiences from which they had only just been rescued by captivity. The effect upon the spirit of the French troops of the repeated failures with numerous losses during 1915 and 1916 was never discussed as an element in the computation of chances. It was assumed that the Allied soldiers were infrangible steel, and enemy soldiers ordinary flesh. And yet in the event, French morale broke first. The two great offensives of 1917 were decided upon what turned out to be an entirely false estimate of the fighting quality of our greatest foe and of the limits of endurance of the Allied troops.

On other fronts, however, there was a distinct falling off in the spirit of the forces that opposed the Allied Armies in the case of two of the belligerents. Speaking of the Turkish Army at the end of 1916, Ludendorff says :

Real weakness of the Turk

" The Turkish Army was exhausted. To begin with, it had not recovered from the Balkan War before it was involved in another. Its wastage from disease and in action was

continuously high. The trustworthy, brave Anatolian had vanished from its ranks. The unreliable Arab auxiliaries were playing an increasingly important part everywhere, but especially in Mesopotamia and Palestine.